

# Take a community club course – abroad

Participants get to pick up skills, travel

BY MELISSA KOK

COMMUNITY clubs have gone into running enrichment courses overseas.

Those who sign up for these classes can now head to Hanoi in Vietnam and even Bordeaux in France to pick up knowledge in areas ranging from anti-ageing strategies to wine appreciation.

The People's Association (PA), which runs the community clubs, hopes to reach out to a wider spectrum of people, including the segment comprising professionals, managers, executives and techni-

cians, known widely in marketing parlance as PMETs.

A PA spokesman said: "These courses will offer residents opportunities to broaden their learning experiences, discover new places and enhance the enjoyment of making friends in a relaxed holiday setting."

She added that the courses are targeted at those open to combining trips overseas with some learning.

For a start, PA will run seven such life-style-oriented and upmarket courses between this month and December.

## Some overseas programmes offered by PA

### Hanoi and Halong Bay gourmet tour, Vietnam

**When:** Dec 4 to Dec 8

**What:** Participants will try out traditional Vietnamese and French cuisine at chic restaurants, and learn the art of wine pairing. They will also go on guided walking tours to learn about Hanoi's culture and heritage and take a romantic overnight cruise in Halong Bay, dinner under moonlight included.

**Cost:** \$2,100 for members and \$2,300 for non-members

### Naturopathy anti-ageing retreat in Hat

### Yai, Thailand

**When:** Dec 15 to Dec 19

**What:** Participants will stay in a hill retreat house in Hat Yai, where they will learn about naturopathy treatments to counter ageing and chronic diseases. There will be workshops on herbal spa therapy and stress management, and a herbal fusion cooking class, with a focus on cancer prevention and treatment.

**Cost:** \$570 for members and \$580 for non-members

### Eco-weekend getaway in Sedili Besar, Johor, Malaysia

**When:** Sept 18 to Sept 19, and Oct 8 to Oct 9

**What:** The trip will include a stay at the eco-friendly Tanjung Sutera, a former coconut plantation converted into a resort. There, participants will be treated to kampung-style Malay and Chinese cuisine, and take part in quirky activities such as tree climbing. They will also go on walks to nearby Malay villages to find out more about the life and culture of the people living there.

**Cost:** \$220 for members and \$240 for non-members



Participants of an eco-rice farming tour in Chiang Rai, Thailand, getting a taste of life as a farmer. The tour includes food, lodging and an interactive cultural tour featuring Chiang Rai's hill tribes. PHOTO: PEOPLE'S ASSOCIATION

One is a six-day holiday to Osaka and Kyoto in Japan, which will include a swing through popular shopping haunts and visits to places of interest such as the Kinkakuji and Kiyomizu temples and the Akashi Kaikyo Bridge.

Closer to home, a five-day course on anti-ageing practices will take place in

Hat Yai, Thailand. Families may also opt for a six-day eco-rice farming tour in Chiang Rai, where they can live the life of a farmer and tour Chiang Rai's hill tribes.

Ms Cher Lim, 46, who will lead a gourmet food tour to Hanoi in December, said more working professionals in their mid-30s and above are signing up for such courses.

The managing director of a wine import business, who has been a PA trainer since last year, said: "Singaporeans, especially the PMETs, are earning more than they did a few years ago. The level of expectation is a lot higher, so such courses will appeal to them."

In her upcoming tour, for example, participants will learn to cook Western and Vietnamese dishes, and how to pair wines with food, as well as discover Hanoi culture along the way.

The prices of these courses may seem pretty steep – up to \$6,180 for the five-day Bordeaux wineries tour for non-members of PA.

## SATISFYING NEW APPETITES

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Ms Cher Lim, who will be leading a gourmet food tour to Hanoi in December. The managing director of a wine import business has been a PA trainer since last year.

But PA said its courses are priced below commercial rates and offer value for money.

It added that the fee for most of its courses includes the return ticket on Singapore Airlines, four-star accommodation, meals, sight-seeing and an accompanying trainer.

PA members, who pay dues of \$10 to \$12 every five years, get discounts on the prices of these courses.

PA expects about 20 participants for most courses.

Those interested may sign up through its website or register with their neighbourhood community clubs.

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